

VA-Trainee Recruitment Events (VA-TRE)

Facility Policy Factsheet

What are national VA-Trainee Recruitment Events (VA-TRE)?

VA-TREs are designed to help provide a robust pipeline of highly-qualified VA trained Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) through established recurring national hiring events that systematically provide matching opportunities for HPTs to the needs of facilities. VA-TREs will be hosted for numerous healthcare occupations.

What are the benefits and expectations of participating in VA-TRE?

Connect. Provide participating VAMCs with highly qualified, VA-trained HPT candidates interested in permanent VA employment. Promoting improved VA Medical Center inter-facility coordination between HPTs, human resources, and hiring managers.

Match. Provide a streamlined system to bring together facilities and qualified VHA-trained HPTs who are interested in staying with the VA and finding ideal job opportunities. The match is a non-binding process that leads to a meet and greet discussion between the facility and HPT.

Place. Shorten HPT recruitment and onboarding timelines. Hiring current HPTs can be quick and easy. HPTs may be selected and tentatively offered positions up to one year prior and any time after completion of their training.

Retain. VA-TRE provides the opportunity for VHA to retain VHA trained employees and thus achieve high return on investment of VA training dollars by keeping top talent in the system.

What does my facility need to do to prepare prior to VA-TRE hiring events?

Effectively preparing for VA-TRE hiring events will make the process a successful experience for both facility and VA HPT candidates:

Meet National and Local Union Agreement(s). The 2011 AFGE Master Agreement states that: “All Title 38 bargaining unit positions will be announced facility wide with posting and/or distribution a proper subject for local bargaining.”. These announcements will be posted for 14 calendar days, to afford current employees first consideration when filling vacancies. There are no exceptions to this requirement.

For Title 38 hybrid bargaining positions, the AFGE Master Agreement states all vacancies above the full performance level must meet Article 23-Merit Promotion, posting requirements. Article 23, Section 8, states all bargaining unit positions will be posted facility wide for 15 workdays unless filled by Article 23, Section 7 which provides some specific exclusions (i.e. Disabled Veterans, persons with disabilities under Schedule A, and Schedule B Excepted Appointments). This requirement is to afford current employees first consideration for promotion when filling vacancies. More information can be found at: http://afgenvac.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Master_Agreement.pdf.

Identification of vacancies and local Resource Management Committee (RMC) approval. Facilities must identify HPT eligible vacancies prior to each VA-TRE hiring event. Facilities must follow local RMC approval processes prior to registering for VA-TRE. During facility registration, facility will only register positions/vacancies that are eligible and approved to fill with current VA HPT candidates.

What are the facility's responsibilities during VA-TRE hiring events?

Each facility will complete the following action items during the Facility Actions Phase within the identified timeframes (provided at the time of facility registration for each VA-TRE):

- 1) **Meet and Greets.** All participating facilities contact *every* matched-candidate by conducting virtual or in-person 15-minute HPT Meet and Greet by staff who speak generally about available positions and answer questions about the facility and local area. Facilities update dashboards in real-time for dates of Meet and Greets and outcomes including potential interview.

Additional responsibilities:

- Schedule the Meet and Greet after initial review of qualifications.
- Meet and Greets may be conducted through Skype IM, Skype calls, email, and phone calls.
- Develop Meet and Greet questions for HPT prior to session.
- Be prepared to answer questions from HPT such as position/VAMC characteristics and to provide information resources for local area.

- 2) **Formal Job Interviews.** Facilities should start coordinating and “blocking” time for interview panel(s) prior to the Meet and Greets and Facility Action Phase. Facilities will schedule, and update the dashboards with dates, for the candidates they identified during the Meet and Greet phase.

VA-TRE Event Management Recommendations: Identify the formal interview questions ahead of time, ask things that may not be easy to find on the CV/resume, and set-up/schedule at the time of Meet and Greet.

- 3) **Selected vs. Not Selected.** Facilities update dashboards to indicate Selected or Not-Selected status for all matched-candidates. Facilities determine if candidate(s) will be scheduled for formal job interviews. If the facility, at anytime after contact, determines that they are selecting or not selecting the candidate the facility will notify the VA-TRE Event Management Team by updating the dashboard.
- 4) **Tentative Job Offers.** Facilities will select and extend tentative offers to HPT candidates prior to their completion of training by utilizing the non-competitive hiring process. The hiring manager will work with their HR Department to extend tentative offers. Offers may be made contingent upon trainees meeting qualifications at the time of appointment.
- 5) **Candidate Response.** Facilities will update the “cert” dashboards to reflect candidate response to the extended tentative offers (accepted offer, declined offer) and provide the appropriate date.
- 6) **Stay Interviews.** As part of the VA-TRE participation, supervisors will be asked to conduct guided “stay interviews” with the HPTs they hire. Stay interviews will be conducted 30/90 days after EOD and on an annual basis moving forward. Stay interviews are a strategic and systematic approach for supervisors to make employee retention and engagement an organizational priority. Stay interviews are intended to be an informal discussion around a set of recommended questions to uncover problems, concerns, and opportunities for employees before they decide to leave VA employment. More information on conducting Stay Interviews will be provided to supervisors following successful placement of HPTs.